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A

SERMON

Occasioned by the

DEATH

Of the late Reverend

Mr. JAMES WOOD.

[Price Six-pence.]

A

SERMON

On the

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Of the late Reverend

Mr. JAMES WOOD.

[Price Six Pence.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

The Life and Death of a Chriſtian, *opened and applied,*

IN A

SERMON

Occaſioned by the

DEATH

Of the late Reverend

Mr. James Wood,

Who departed this Life

MAY the 15th, 1742.

PREACHED

At the *King's Weigh-houſe* in *Eaſtcheap.*

By W. LANGFORD, *M.A.*

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Congregation.

LONDON:

Printed for JOSEPH DAVIDSON, at the *Angel* in the *Poultry*; and RICHARD KING, at the *Bible and Crown* in *Foreſtreet*, 1742.

[Price Six-pence]

The Life and Death of a Christian, opened and applied,

IN A

SERMON

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Of the late Reverend

Mr. James Wood,

BRITISH MUSEUM

His Life

M A [illegible], 1742.

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By W. LANGFORD, M.A.

Pastor of the Church of the Congregation.

LONDON:

Printed for Joseph Davidson, at the Angel in the Poultry; and Richard King, at the Bible and Crown in Grafton-street, 1742.

[Price 6d.]

[redacted]

Phil. i. 21.

For to me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain.

THE Chriſtian Religion, imprinted on the Heart, leads to a holy Life, and a happy Death. Sincere Chriſtians are more excellent than their Neighbors in Life, and their Death will be unſpeakably and eternally advantagious to them.

The Apoſtle *Paul*, the Author of this Epiſtle, was one of the moſt eminent Examples of the Chriſtian Life that ever was, and no wonder that he could look to Death, not only without Terror, but with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory.

He had been a furious Perſecutor of the Chriſtians before his Converſion, but the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which was exceeding abundant towards him, made him a moſt zealous Preacher of his Goſpel, and a patient, courageous Sufferer for it.

21x

He was a Priſoner at *Rome* when he wrote this Epiſtle; the *Philippians* having been converted by the Bleſſing of God on his Miniſtry, ſympathized very tenderly with him in his Bonds, and this Sympathy they expreſſed by their Meſſenger *Epaphroditus*, whom they ſent with a liberal Preſent to him; by which Meſſenger he returned to them a more valuable Gift, this excellent Letter: Wherein, after a moſt pious and affectionate Salutation, expreſſive of his tender Love to them, and good Hopes concerning them, he proceeds to the Subject of his Sufferings for Chriſt's Sake; and for their Comfort he tells them, that theſe Things had fallen out rather to the Furtherance, than to the Obſtruction of the Goſpel; for, as he was now a Priſoner at large, many were converted by his Preaching at *Rome*, (ſome even of *Cæſar's* Houſhold) and his Example excited many Chriſtians to ſpeak the Word more boldly, and without Fear; the Preachers, who roſe up on this Occaſion, were indeed very different Men in their Views and Principles; ſome of them preached Chriſt out of Envy and Strife, to rival the Apoſtle in the Affections of the Churches, and to ſet up themſelves as Perſons worthy of more Regard than he: Others preached out of Good-will to Souls, and with a Deſign to ſupply the Apoſtle's Place, when he was not able to preach the Goſpel ſo widely as he had done; nevertheleſs he, (like

a true

a true Lover of Chriſt) rejoiced that he was preached, whether in Pretence or in Sincerity—And for himſelf he declares, *(Ver.* 20.) *that his earneſt Hope and Expectation was, that Chriſt ſhould be magnified in his Body, whether by Life, or by Death*; by Life, in the Offices of a faithful Preacher, or by Death, in the Behaviour of a ſtedfaſt Chriſtian; and (if it pleaſed God) a triumphant Martyr.—

In my Text, he ſets his Life and Death before us for our Imitation and Encouragement: *For to me to live is Chriſt, and to die is Gain—To me to live is Chriſt*—He is the End and Scope, the Comfort and Felicity, the Fountain, Object, and Center of my Life; if I live through him, and for him, I live—My great Buſineſs in Life, is to declare the Wonders of his Love, to preach his unſearchable Riches and Grace, to honour and glorify him as a Chriſtian, a Miniſter, and an Apoſtle—And when theſe Ends of Life ſhall be fulfilled, I ſhall not be afraid or unwilling to die, in what Shape ſoever Death may be ſent to meet me; for Death, at the End of ſuch a Life, will be a very great Bleſſing to me, the Concluſion of all my Labors and Sorrows, and the Gate by which I ſhall enter into the Preſence and Enjoyment of that dear and glorious Redeemer, who ſhed his Blood for me, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve.

HAVING thus briefly opened the Text, I ſhall endeavour,

I. To give you a larger and more diſtinct Account of the Life of a Chriſtian, which is here characterized; and,

II. To ſhow the great Advantage of Death to the Chriſtian, after a Life of Devotedneſs to his Saviour.

I. I BEGIN with ſome Thoughts on the Life of a Chriſtian, as it is here characterized —*To him to live is Chriſt*—This is the genuine Character of the real Chriſtian's Life; 'tis not confined to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, but extends to all without Exception, who believe on the Name of Jeſus unto Life everlaſting—Chriſt is our Life; the Author, Preſerver, the great Object, the laſt End, and the chief Joy of our Life.

(1.) CHRIST is the Author of our Life—Our natural Life is the Effect of his creating Power; *for by him all Things were created that are in Heaven, and that are on Earth* *: His Hands faſhioned and formed our Bodies, and he created our Spirits within us; we are all his Workmanſhip, and he is the Fountain of our ſpiritual Life; a Sentence of Death is pronounced againſt us, as Sinners, by the holy and righteous Law of God; Jeſus Chriſt

* Col. i. 16.

came

came into the World in the Fulneſs of Time, (according to an Agreement and Covenant that paſſed between the Father and him before the World began) that we might have Life; *he gave his Life a Ranſom for many, and he that believeth on him, ſhall not come into Condemnation, but is paſſed from Death unto Life* *; he is delivered from the Curſe of the Law, and accepted of God, through the imputed Righteouſneſs of Jeſus. And this happy State well deſerves the Name of Life; for it is Heaven begun on Earth. And as our Life of Juſtification, ſo that of Sanctification, flows from the Mediation of Chriſt, and the Agency of his Spirit; he, as the Head of the Church, is anointed with the Holy Spirit above Meaſure, and diffuſes vital Influences into all the Members of his Body; if we *are alive unto God*, 'tis *through Jeſus Chriſt, who liveth in us by his Spirit.*

(2.) CHRIST is the Preſerver of our Life—*Becauſe he lives, we ſhall live alſo* †. Our natural Life is preſerved by his Providence, (for in him all Things conſiſt) and our ſpiritual Life is maintained by his Interceſſion for us, and continual Supplies of his Grace; by him we ſtand in the Favour of God. He bears our unworthy Names on his Heart, as our High-Prieſt in the heavenly Sanctuary; he intercedes for us, that our Faith may not fail, and

* John v. 24. † John xiv. 19.

he gives his good Spirit to direct, aſſiſt, and encourage us in the Way of our Duty, to ſubdue our Iniquities under us, to ſtrengthen us with all Might in our Souls, according to his glorious Power, that we may be able to ſtand in the evil Day, and to preſerve us in his Service to the End of Life. Chriſt keeps the good Thing which Believers have committed to him, even unto the Day of Redemption; we are preſerved in him; his Almighty Power is our Refuge and Defence; his unchangeable Love is our Hope and our Security.

(3.) CHRIST is the grand Object of the Believer's Life; *the Life which I live in the Fleſh, is by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me* *. Chriſt is the great Object of Faith, and Faith the main Principle of the Chriſtian Life—By Faith the ſincere Diſciple of Jeſus often contemplates his divine and mediatorial Glory; his infinite Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs; the Fulneſs of all the Perfections of the Godhead that dwells in him; his marvellous Incarnation; his ſaving Office and Performances; his Doctrine and Example; his meritorious Obedience and Sufferings for us; his Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, and the Diſcharge of his ſacerdotal and kingly Offices in Heaven: Theſe are the frequent and moſt delightful

* Gal. ii. 20.

Subjects

Subjects of a Chriſtian's Meditations; he cannot live without realizing Views of Chriſt in theſe Relations and Characters; he finds his ſpiritual Life encreaſing or languiſhing, as his Eye is more or leſs directed to the great Author and Finiſher of his Faith; if Chriſt be preſent to his Mind; if he can ſee his Beauty in the Glaſs of the Goſpel, and by the Illumination of his Spirit, his Love is enflamed, his hope invigorated, his holy Deſires are quickened, his Heart is abſtracted from Self and the Creature, Sin is imbittered to him, and all the Duties of Religion made eaſy and delightful to his Soul; but when there is a ſeparating Cloud between Chriſt and him, his Graces ſicken and wither, as the Flowers in a ſtormy Day.

(4.) CHRIST is the End of the Believer's Life. The Children of this World live to themſelves; their higheſt Aim is to promote their temporal Intereſts; but none of us (ſays the Apoſtle in the Name of the univerſal Church) *none of us liveth to himſelf, and no Man dieth to himſelf; but whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord* *. *The Love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge; that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto*

* Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

him which died for them, and roſe again *. The firſt Chriſtians lived to Chriſt, and ſhould not we live to him? Is not Chriſt the ſame Yeſterday, To-day, and for ever? Are not we as much under Law to him, as they were? Are we not as much indebted to his dying Love, and to his perpetual Interceſſion? Have we not the ſame Rule of Life, the ſame Covenant of Grace, the ſame Promiſes, the ſame good Spirit to help us, and the ſame Crown of Glory in Proſpect? Doubtleſs, Chriſt ſhould be the End of our Converſation; we ſhould mind his Things more than our own; his Glory ſhould be chiefly regarded; his Service ſhould be our principal Care and Employment.—And 'tis the Character, as well as the Duty, of all ſincere Chriſtians to live not to themſelves, but to Jeſus Chriſt.—To him they devoted their Souls and Bodies, when they were made his willing People in the Day of his Power; in that bleſſed Day, they not only received him, and reſted on him alone for their Salvation, but they conſented to be his obedient Subjects and Servants; they took his Yoke upon them, and yielded themſelves unfeignedly and entirely to the Lord: In that happy Hour, high Thoughts and lofty Imaginations were caſt down, every thing that exalted itſelf againſt the Knowledge of God was

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

abaſed,

abaſed, and every Thought, by the Operation of the Holy Spirit, was brought into Captivity to the Obedience of Chriſt—In the moſt ſolemn and deliberate Manner, with full Conſent and Purpoſe of Heart, they renounced all Rivals, Sin, Satan, the World, and Self-Righteouſneſs, and offered up themſelves to the Lord Jeſus, as his Purchaſe and rightful Property, determined to glorify him with their Bodies and Souls which are his; and at the ſame time they referred all their Affairs to his Diſpoſal and Conduct—Some of you well remember how your Hearts were affected, and what paſſed between Chriſt and you in the Day of your Eſpouſals to him; I aſk you now, whether ye did not then abſolutely, and without Reſerve, dedicate yourſelves to Chriſt with this Senſe: "Bleſſed "Redeemer, thou haſt delivered us, and "thou ſhalt reign over us; we are thine, "and thee we will follow whitherſoever thou "goeſt?" Thus Chriſtians are devoted to their Saviour; and it is their Care (according to the Meaſure of the Grace given to them) to live as a People conſecrated to him; to adorn his Goſpel in all Things, by a Diſcharge of perſonal and relative Duties on Goſpel-Principles—They pray, and give Thanks to God in his Name, depending on his Righteouſneſs for Acceptance, and on his Spirit for Aſſiſtance—The Virtues of Juſtice and Charity, which they are very careful to

per-

perform, flow chiefly from a Senſe of Chriſt's Commands, and a grateful Remembrance of his Grace, who was Rich, *but became Poor for our Sakes, that we, through his Poverty, might be made Rich*; in ſhort, all their relative Duties are done in the Name of Chriſt, in Obedience to his Will, and with an Eye to his Glory; and becauſe 'tis but little that they themſelves can do for the Honour of our Redeemer, they earneſtly pray, that others may be diſpoſed to glorify him, and that his Kingdom may be advanced in all Parts of the World, and they rejoice in the Succeſs of his Goſpel, by whatever Inſtruments it be promoted. Thus Chriſt is the laſt End of a Chriſtian's Life. I have inſiſted the longer on this, becauſe I apprehend, 'tis the Thing principally meant by the Expreſſion in the Text—*To me to live is Chriſt.* Let me add,

(5.) CHRIST is the chief Joy of the Believer's Life. Nothing affords him a Satisfaction equal to that which ariſes from a well grounded Truſt in Chriſt, Communion with him in his Ordinances here below, and the Hope of an everlaſting Viſion and Enjoyment of him in the World above. His Joy in Chriſt gives a ſweet Reliſh to all his temporal Comforts, and is his Support under every Affliction of Life, and in the Proſpects and Approaches of Death.

HAVING

HAVING taken a View of the Chriſtian Life, let us

II. CONSIDER the great Advantage which he ſhall receive by Death.

IF *to us to live be Chriſt, to die will be gain.* Death is the King of Terrors to *wicked* Men; they loſe all their Happineſs with their Breath, not only their Bodies and all their Poſſeſſions and Pleaſures in this World, but their Souls with the means of their Salvation: this is an unſpeakable, an irreparable, an everlaſting Loſs. It muſt be confeſſed too that *good* Men loſe ſomething at Death; they are deprived of all their earthly Friends and Comforts, but they gain by dying infinitely more than they loſe. Chriſt hath taken away the *Sting of Death, and turned the Curſe into a Bleſſing*; and therefore the Apoſtle *Paul* puts Death as well as Life into the Catalogue of the Chriſtian's mercies †. Let us conſider the happy Conſequences of the Death of a Chriſtian, as far as the Light of Revelation aſſiſts us in our Meditations on a future State. And

(1.) AT Death the Chriſtian is releaſed from the Inconveniences and Pains that attend this mortal Body—Fond as we are of theſe Bodies, it is certain our Souls pay very dear for their Lodging in them. The Cravings

(†) Cor. iii. 18.

of

of Appetite often call off our Attention from things more ſuitable to our rational Natures; a great deal of time muſt be ſpent in repairing the Waſtes of our animal Frame by Meat and Drink; Amuſements and Diverſions are alſo in ſome Caſes very neceſſary for us, though our better Part deſpiſes them, and aſpires to higher and nobler Entertainments; we muſt take a great deal of Care to defend our frail Bodies againſt ſurrounding Dangers, and when we have done all we can to defend them, we are in the midſt of Death, and lie open to a thouſand Accidents that may prove fatal to us. How many are the Pains and Diſeaſes to which our Bodies are liable? And what a Hindrance and Snare are they to our Souls in the beſt Concerns? There is a great Variety of bodily Conſtitutions, but every one is attended with peculiar Temptations and Diſadvantages—How often are good Souls led aſtray from God by the external Senſes? What an Impediment is this dull Fleſh of ours in the ſolemn Seaſons of Devotion? How ſadly do the Infirmities of the outward Man bear down many a Child of God, even when the willing Spirit labors to aſcend and converſe with Heaven? Death is a great Benefit to the Chriſtian, as it ſets him free from all theſe Inconveniences, and brings his Soul out of the Priſon of the Fleſh.

(2.) DEATH

(2.) DEATH is Gain to the Chriſtian, becauſe it is an everlaſting Retreat from all the Labors and Sorrows of the preſent Life.

MAN *that is born of a woman hath but a ſhort time to live, and is full of miſery:* Who can reckon up the various Cares and Burdens of human Life? It begins with Tears, and concludes with a Groan—and from firſt to laſt is very much imbittered by Troubles incident to all Men and every Condition —The rich and great are expoſed to Envy, and a Multitude of Diſappointments, Cares, and Loſſes; the poor lie open to Contempt and many grievous Hardſhips: And there is no State of Life exempted from Affliction of one kind or another; our earthly Pleaſures are all taxed with pain, our Comforts are all mixed with Sorrow, and they are uncertain tranſitory things: So that there is no permanent Felicity under the Sun. But *bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they reſt from their Labors,* they are got into a quiet Harbor, where the angry Winds and Waves can give them no Diſturbance.

(3.) ANOTHER great Advantage which the Chriſtian receives by Death, is an everlaſting Freedom from the Temptations of Satan and an evil World. The Chriſtian Life here below is a Life of Conflict. We *war,* not only *with Fleſh and Blood,* but *with*

Principalities, with Powers, and with ſpiritual Wickedneſſes in high Places; the Devil goes about ſeeking whom he may devour, and he will moleſt thoſe whom he cannot deſtroy; he has fiery Darts, whereby he affrights and wounds many a Soul that is dear to God; he hates Chriſtians, becauſe God loves them; and if he had Power equal to his Malice, he would not ſuffer them to enjoy a Moment's Reſt; but at Death the Chriſtian is a perfect Conqueror, and crowned with eternal Victory; Satan is then bruiſed under his Feet, and ſhall not have leave to ſhoot one Arrow more at him to all Eternity—And then he bids adieu to the Frowns and Flatteries of this evil World, no more to be aſſaulted by this dangerous Enemy, which is a Confederate with Satan, and engaged in perpetual War with the Saints of the moſt high. Now if the Man that endures Temptation be happy, how happy is he that is for ever above the Reach of Temptation, confirmed in a State of perfect Purity and Peace? If the Chriſtian Combatant be happy, how bleſſed is the Chriſtian Conqueror, when he comes to *Zion* with Songs and everlaſting Joy on his Head?

(4.) DEATH is Gain to the Chriſtian, for it ſets him free from Sin. Were we delivered from all outward Afflictions and Temptations in this Life, yet we could not be perfectly happy, becauſe Sin dwelleth in us, and will

will often oblige us to mourn and weep in the Preſence of God. This inbred Enemy is the great Troubler of our Peace; the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh, and theſe two are contrary the one to the other; ſo that we cannot do the Things that we would, and too often do the Things that we would not: Experience concurs with Scripture in the Proof of this ſad Truth; but at Death the Chriſtian will be made perfect, and enter into that high and holy Place, into which no unclean Thing can be admitted. When Death has pulled down the earthly Houſe of our Tabernacle, the Leproſy of Sin, which cleaved to it until that Moment, ſhall be for ever removed; and oh! how bleſſed are they who feel every thing in their Powers and Faculties exactly conformed to the Will of God; who are without Spot or Blemiſh, or any ſinful Diſorder in their Minds and Hearts? This is a Bleſſedneſs, the diſtant Proſpect whereof gives unſpeakable Joy to the Believer.

(5.) DEATH is Gain to the Chriſtian, becauſe 'tis the Gate whereby he enters into the immediate Preſence and Enjoyment of Chriſt in Heaven. Death would be a great Loſs to the Chriſtian, if his Soul were to be ſeparated from the Preſence of Chriſt, and caſt into a deep Sleep from the Time of its Separation from the Body, unto the Day of Judgment; and much more Reaſon would

he have to tremble at the Thoughts of his Diſſolution, if his Soul were to be thrown into a purgatory Fire for the Expiation of any of his Sins: But bleſſed be God, there is no Ground for theſe melancholy Concluſions; the Doctrine of the Soul's Sleep is but an idle Dream, and that of Purgatory an artful Contrivance of Men, with whom Gain is Godlineſs—Reaſon will tell us, that the Soul, which is in its Nature very different from the Body, may live and act out of the Body, as well as in it—What neceſſary Connexion is there between Mind and Matter? Why may not Underſtanding, Will, Reflection, Self-conſciouſneſs, and active Power, remain and operate without Fleſh and Blood? Revelation aſſures us, that the moſt perfect Intelligences are thoſe that were never cloathed with Fleſh; the Scriptures teach us, *that when the Body returns to the Duſt, the Spirit goes to God who gave it*; that *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, were alive to God after the Diſſolution of their Bodies; that *Moſes* and *Elias* appeared in a viſible Form, and converſed with our Saviour many hundred Years after their Departure out of this World; and I think, 'tis very certain from the New Teſtament, that the Souls of the Faithful are received, immediately after Death, into the Preſence and Fruition of Jeſus Chriſt in Heaven—*This Day* (ſaid our Lord to the penitent Thief on the Croſs) *ſhalt thou be with*

me

me in Paradiſe *. *The rich Man died, and lift up his Eyes in Hell; Lazarus died, and was carried by Angels into Abraham's Boſom* †—Holy *Stephen* cried out with his dying Breath, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*—Whither did he deſire to be tranſlated? Surely into thoſe Heavens that were then miraculouſly opened to him, and where he ſaw Jeſus ſtanding at the Right-hand of God ‡. The Apoſtle *Paul* declares in my Text, that Death would be Gain to him; and a little afterwards (*Ver.* 23.) he expreſſes his Deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt; which was far better for him, than the beſt State in the World and Church here below. And he ſpeaks in the Name of all true Chriſtians; *we are always confident* (or couragious) *knowing that whilſt we are at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord; (for we walk by Faith, and not by Sight;) we are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord* ‖—But oh! who can conceive the Happineſs of the Spirits of juſt Men in the Preſence of the Lord Jeſus? If it be ſo ſweet to be with him now, in an Ordinance, by Faith and Love, what muſt they enjoy, who are with him in his Father's Houſe above? There they behold the Face of God in Righteouſneſs, and are ſatisfied with his Likeneſs; there they ſee

* Luke iii. 43. † Luke xvi. 19, &c. ‡ Acts vii. 56.
‖ 2 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8.

Jeſus

Jeſus, not as we do darkly through a Glaſs, but Face to Face; they ſee his divine and mediatorial Glory in a Way that we know not; they know more of his Perſon and Offices than the Prophets and Apoſtles, the moſt eminent Saints ever did in our World; they know him by a moſt immediate, clear, ſatisfying and transforming Viſion; they converſe with him, and join with Angels in aſcribing Glory to him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb that was ſlain, and who waſhed them from their Sins in his own Blood; they are not only Spectators, but Participants of Chriſt's Glory; they dwell in the Sun-ſhine of his Countenance, and he ſetteth them before his Face for ever; and they are changed into his Image; they are perfectly like him; ſhine in all the Beauties of Holineſs, and have no Spot upon them; they are employed in the moſt honourable and delightful Services, as much ſuperior to any we in this World are capable of, as the Buſineſs of Men is to the little Affairs of young Children—And that which crowns their Happineſs is the Eternity of it; they ſhall be for ever with the Lord; their Spirits ſhall enjoy a ſeparate Happineſs till the Reſurrection-Day, and then the Lord will deſcend from Heaven, raiſe their Duſt, and change their vile Bodies, that they may be faſhioned like unto his own glorious Body, according to the mighty

mighty working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all Things unto himſelf.

I NOW proceed to the Application of the Diſcourſe.

(1.) LET none of us think that we ſhall die the happy Death of the Chriſtian, if we remain Strangers and Enemies to his holy Life. Who does not wiſh to die the Death of a Chriſtian, *and that his latter End may be like his?* but how few are reconciled to and acquainted with the Chriſtian Life? Many who name the Name of Jeſus are ſo far from living to him, that they are the Enemies of his Croſs, their God is their Belly, their Glory is in their Shame, and they mind earthly Things as their chief Good; and what End can they expect but Deſtruction? How many even in this Chriſtian Land live as if they were under no Obligations to a Creator or a Redeemer? live as if they thought themſelves ſent into the World only to fill a Space, to eat, drink, ſleep, play, and then die and be no more? And how many have a fair form of Chriſtianity without the power of it? Oh! let it be our Concern to be Chriſtians indeed and in Truth. Let us examine ourſelves whether Chriſt be in us by his Spirit the Hope of Glory; whether we have been tranſlated from a State of ſpiritual Death to a divine and heavenly Life? Are

we

we dead to Sin, delivered from the condemning Guilt and the reigning Power of it? Are we *alive unto God, through Chriſt?* Have we received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, as *made of God to us Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption?* And do we live to him? Do we pray and worſhip in his Name? Do we ſeriouſly endeavour to walk up and down in his Name, and to glorify and ſerve him in all Righteouſneſs and Holineſs of Life? Let us put theſe Queſtions to ourſelves, and take heed that we do not deceive ourſelves with a Name and Shew of Life, while we are really dead—May the Prince of Life quicken thoſe that are dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes, and raiſe them by his all-creating Power to Newneſs of Life! May he ſpeak by his Spirit, as well as his Word, that they who are in the Graves of Iniquity, may hear his Voice and live! 'Tis your Duty, Sinners, to attend with Diligence on the Means of ſpiritual Life, and to pray for a divine Bleſſing, which a gracious God has encouraged you to hope for through Chriſt in this Way, and in no other.

(2.) Let Chriſtians be more careful to improve Life, and not be afraid or unwilling to die. While Life is continued, be thankful for it, and give all Diligence (through Grace) to live to the Honour, and in the Service, of that Jeſus, who died for you, and lives for ever,

ever, to be your Advocate and Friend in Heaven. Let his *Love conſtrain you, to live not to yourſelves, but to him*; let his Glory be your ultimate End and Scope; pray for more public, and truly Chriſtian Spirits; ſtudy to recommend his Goſpel, and to expreſs your Veneration and Gratitude to him by doing his Commandments—Attend to your Duty in all perſonal and relative Regards; and if you do ſo, you will have no Cauſe to be weary of Life; for it is worth while to live to Chriſt, even in this World of Imperfection and Sorrow—There is unſpeakable Honour and Pleaſure, and Profit, in the Chriſtian Life, though it is a Life of Labor and Conflict. *Paul* (as you may ſee in the Verſes below my Text) was content to be detained from his own deſired Happineſs with Chriſt in Heaven, ſo long as God had farther Work for him to do on Earth; the longer and the better we ſerve Chriſt here, *the more abundant Entrance ſhall be miniſtred to us into his heavenly Kingdom and Glory.* But when the Work of Life is finiſhed, why ſhould we be afraid or unwilling to die? Why ſhould we not be glad to go home, when the Labors of the Day are at an End, and the Shadows of the Evening are ſtretched out upon us? When our Father calls us to Reſt, ſhall we not with Pleaſure receive the Command, lay down our Heads and die? Chriſt has not only

diſarmed Death, but converted it into a Bleſſing; and therefore the Thoughts of Dying ſhould be welcome to every one who believes on him, and lives to him.

(3.) Is Death Gain to the Chriſtian? Let us then be ſubmiſſive and patient under the Loſs of our Chriſtian Friends—'Tis true when a Chriſtian dies, he carries a precious Treaſure of Gifts and Graces with him from our World to Heaven; and this Thought ſhould affect us, and teach us to lay to Heart ſuch a Diſpenſation of Providence, which to us may be a very great Loſs; and the Death of a faithful Miniſter is afflictive in a peculiar Degree, for it is a public Loſs: But ſince our Chriſtian Brethren gain infinitely more to themſelves, than we loſe by their Removal, the Law of Charity obliges us to moderate our Grief, and directs us rather to imitate their holy Lives, than to mourn for their Death.

I WOULD now take notice of the afflictive Providence that has deprived you in this Church of your late dear and worthy Paſtor, the Reverend Mr. *James Wood*. This Diſpenſation, I perſuade myſelf, has touched many Hearts, and perhaps my own has not been the leaſt affected with it. I own myſelf very unworthy to ſpeak to the Character of ſo eminent a Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt; and my ſhort and imperfect Acquaintance with him

him, begun in the viſible Decline of his Life, renders me incapable of doing that Honour to his Name and Memory, which may be expected on this Occaſion; and beſides this, he laid me under ſuch a Reſtraint by his expreſs Deſire on his Death-bed, that no Funeral Sermon ſhould be preached on Occaſion of his Deceaſe, that I dare not enlarge very much on this Part of my Diſcourſe—I will however ſay, what you well know, that you have loſt an excellent Preacher; a Workman that needed not to be aſhamed, for he rightly divided the Word of Truth; a Scribe well inſtructed to the Kingdom of God, *who brought out of a good Treaſure, good Things both new and old*—His Spirit was deeply impreſs'd with the great Truths of the Goſpel, and he *contended earneſtly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*. His miniſterial Abilities were very eminent, and God bleſſed him with great Acceptance, and (I truſt) very great Succeſs in many Places, and particularly in his Miniſtrations to this Church, where he ſtood with ſo much Honour and and Comfort many Years; and if the Counſels of God had been agreeable to our ſincere Deſires and Prayers, he ſhould have ſtood many Years longer in the Fulneſs of the Bleſſings of the Goſpel of Chriſt—But the all-wiſe Governor of the World has ſeen fit to remove this his Servant; and we muſt ſee his Face, and hear his Voice no more.

A few Sermons he publiſhed, by which he being dead, yet ſpeaketh to you; and I cannot forbear, on this Occaſion, to put you in mind of thoſe excellent Diſcourſes on the Parable of the Ten Virgins, in which there is a remarkable Spirit of Piety, and a rich Variety of the moſt ſerious and uſeful Reflections and Counſels ſuited to the Caſes of Saints and Sinners.

It pleaſed God to viſit him with ſore Afflictions in the latter Part of Life, which he bore with great Patience and Reſignation to the Will of God, often expreſſing his Gratitude to God for inward Supports and Conſolations, which in the Multitude of his Thoughts within him delighted his Soul—In his laſt Illneſs, even in the near Views of Death, he declared to me and others his joyful Hope, (through Grace) *of that Reſt that remaineth for the People of God*, and expreſs'd an earneſt Deſire to be with Chriſt. He bore his Teſtimony, with his dying Breath, to the Truth and Power of that Goſpel which he preached to you, and which was his Support in the Afflictions of Life and the Proſpects of Eternity.

His Work is done, his Imperfections, I truſt, all pardoned and removed, and he is gone to receive a glorious Reward. Let us who ſurvive attend to our Duty, and hear the Voice of the Rod. This Providence ſpeaks to us all—May God the Father of the

the Fatherleſs, and the Judge of the Widow, ſupport the near and dear Relatives of the Deceaſed, and incline many to ſhew Kindneſs to them! May you in this Congregation ſee the Hand of the Lord, and humble yourſelves under it. May the Lord give you Counſel, ſupply the preſent Vacancy, and ſtill bleſs his Word and Ordinances to you. Miniſters die, but Chriſt, the great Shepherd and Biſhop of Souls, lives for ever, to feed and defend his Church; look to him for Direction; be careful and conſtant in your Attendance on his Inſtitutions, and live in Love, and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you.

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